

Claims 1 and 4 and Claims 3 and 6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) and 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), respectively, over Widdowson (WO 97/49400), and Claims 1-6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over White et al. in view of Widdowson. Applicant respectfully traverses.

Applicant provides herewith a third declaration from Dr. John R. White under 37 C.F.R. § 1.131(a) wherein the inventor declares that the invention embodied by the pending claims was made prior to the publication of the Widdowson and White references. In particular, instant invention set forth in Claims 1-6 was conceived and reduced to practice prior to December 31, 1997, and therefore antedates the White and Widdowson publications. Accordingly, the neither the White nor Widdowson references are prior art against the instant invention.

Applicant therefore respectfully requests withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) and 103(a) rejections and allowance of the instant claims. Applicant submits that this application is in condition for allowance and respectfully requests early and favorable notification to that effect. If it would expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to confer with the Applicant's undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,



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